GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2461
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2016
Development of Ajanta-Ellora Caves
Shinde Dr. Shrikant Eknath

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ajanta-Ellora caves have always remained the biggest tourism attraction in the country and if so, the steps taken by the Government to strengthen the ancient and heritage structure of these famous caves;
(b) whether to boost tourism promotion opportunities in Maharashtra and in the country, the Government has decided Aurangabad to host the first ever SAARC tourism summit and if so, the details thereof;
(c) the manner and the extent to which it will be effective to develop tourism in the areas; and
(d) the other plans prepared and implemented and likely to be implemented by the Government to develop tourism in the State of Maharashtra?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a): Yes, Madam. Ajanta and Ellora Caves, both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The Government of India together with the State Government of Maharashtra took extensive steps to execute in two phases to develop tourist infrastructure in and around Ajanta and Ellora Caves from funds received from Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA).

In the first phase, during 1992-2002, an amount of Rs.127.48 crore was utilised for the conservation of the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, strengthening and development of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water supply, afforestation and Aurangabad Airport.

In the second phase, during 2004-2013 an amount of Rs.253.56 crore was utilised for further strengthening of the above infrastructure and for construction of Visitors Centre each at Ajanta and Ellora Caves.

(b) & (c): Ministry of External Affairs has informed that India has proposed to hold a meeting of SAARC Tourism Ministers in Aurangabad on October 13-14, 2016, to the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, Nepal. It is being co-organised with the State Government of Maharashtra. The proposal has been circulated by the SAARC Secretariat among the Member States i.e. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Srilanka and Pakistan on 22nd July, 2016 and their response is awaited, regarding concurrence to the date and composition of delegation.

The Ministerial segment of the meeting is proposed on October 14, 2016 preceded by the official segment on October 13, 2016.

Hosting the SAARC meeting at Aurangabad would be useful in serving to highlight the potential of Ajanta & Ellora Caves.

(d): The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Central Financial Assistance for the project proposal "Development of Sindhudurg Coastal Circuit in Maharashtra" received from the State Government of Maharashtra for Rs.82.17 crore during 2015-16 under the Coastal Circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

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